

Haftarah of Sh'lach L'cha – Joshua 2:1-24  
*chantable English version by Len Fellman*

2:1 Then sent Joshua [son of Nun] [from Shittim] two men as spies in secret and said, “[You go out]; observe the land, especially Jericho.”  
[And so they went], [and they came] [to the house] [of a woman] [who was a harlot] and whose name was Rahab. [They spent the night there].

2 It was reported to the king of Jericho as follows:  
“Behold [there are some men] [who have come]—[they came here] [in the night]—men of the sons of Israel to spy out the land.”

3 Then sent the king of Jericho [a message to Rahab], saying:  
“[You must bring out] the men [who have come] to you, who entered your house, [for indeed], to spy out the land [they have come].”

4 [But she took them]—[the woman took] the two men, [and hid them].  
She answered, [saying this]: | “[Yes they came] [to me], [these men], but I did not know, from whence they came.

5 And as the city gates [were about to close] at nightfall, the men went out. I do not know where they went—these men.  
Pursue them [right away]. [Go after them]; you might overtake them.”

6 But she [had taken them up] to the roof, [and hidden them] in the stalks of flax that were spread out by her [on the roof].

7 [So the king's men] [went after] them [along the way] to the Jordan [as far as] the crossings.  
The gate was shut [right away], following the departure of the pursuers, [to find the men].

8 [As for the men], before [they had gone to sleep], [she went up]—she went up to them [on the roof].

9 She said to the men, “[I surely know] [that God gave]—[YHWH did give] [unto you]—[this very land].  
[How has fallen] [the terror of you] [upon us], and how [they tremble with fear]—those dwelling in the land—[because of you].

10 Indeed [we have heard] [the story] how were dried up by YHWH the waters [of the Red Sea] [before you] [when you came out] of Egypt,  
and that [which you inflicted] [on those two] kings of the Amorites  
who were [on the other side] of the Jordan: to Sichon and to Og—and how that you [destroyed them].

11 [We heard it], and it melted our hearts. There was [not left] [any *ruach*] (courage or spirit) [in any man], [because of you].  
For it is YHWH your God [who truly is] God in heaven above [and on the earth], [here below].

12 [So now therefore] [swear, I pray], to me [by YHWH], since I have dealt with you in kindness, that you show—you also—  
[with the house] of my father such kindness, and that you offer to me, a sign of your good faith:

2:13 [that you will spare the lives] of my father [and my mother], my brothers and sisters,  
 and all that belongs to them, and save our lives—[our souls from death].”

14 [And this was the answer] [to her] [by the men]: “Our lives [in place of yours], [even unto death], provided [you do not] tell  
 of this business of ours. [And it will be] when YHWH gives to us the land [that we will deal with you] in kindness and truth.

15 She let them down by a cord, going through the window.  
 For her house was on the side [of the city wall]. [Inside the wall] is where she lived.

16 She said to them, “Go off to the mountains, lest they should meet you—the pursuers.  
 Hide yourselves there for three [full days], until the pursuers turn back. [After that], you may go on your way.”

17 They said to her—the men: “Blameless are we of this oath of yours, which you made us swear,  
 18 [unless you do this]: When we come in to the land, [take the cord that you used],  
 [that line] of cord made of scarlet [and tie it securely] in the window [through which] you [let us down].  
 Your father and your mother [and your brothers], and all your father’s household you must bring [into the house].

19 [And it shall be] that [whoever should go out] of the doors [of your house] [into the street] his blood [is on his own head] and we are absolved.  
 [But any person] who shall be with you in the house, his blood [is on our head] if a hand [is raised against him].

20 [But if you tell] of this business of ours, then we are absolved of your oath which you caused us to swear.”

21 She responded, “[According to your words], [so let it be].” [She dismissed them] and they left.  
 [Then she tied] the thread of scarlet in the window.

22 They went off and arrived at the mountain, remaining there three full days, till the pursuers turned back.  
 [They were hunted] [by the pursuers] [all the way back], but they failed to find them.

23 [Then they came back]—the two men [came down] [from the mountain, [crossed the river] and came to Joshua Son of Nun.  
 [They related to him] all that had happened to them.

24 They said to Joshua, “[It has surely been given] [by YHWH], into our hands—[the whole of the land].  
 [Already trembling] [final melody:] are all the dwellers of the country, [on account of us].”

## Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gersh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate the following pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which will have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh ( <i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalsholet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (notably cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a very distinctive melody—for which purpose extra syllables fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

*The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:*

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)  
 Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)  
 Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)  
 The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)  
 JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)  
 Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)  
 Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series  
 Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)  
 The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)  
 The New King James Bible (1982)